

CLAIMS:

- 1 1. Polymer bead characterized by swelling rapidly when placed in contact with aqueous  
2 media.
- 1 2. Polymer beads in accordance with claim 1 that are a dry-free-flow powder.
- 1 3. A method of making the beads of claim 1 by water-in-oil process.
- 1 4. The method of making the beads of claim 1 by the droplet extrusion method.
- 1 5. Agarose-dextrose beads made by the method of claim 3.
- 1 6. Gelatin-dextrose beads made by the method of claim 3.
- 1 7. Agarose-maltodextrin beads made by the method of claim 3.
- 1 8. Agarose-dextran beads made by the method of claim 3.
- 1 9. Agarose-Poly (ethylene glycol) beads made by the method of claim 3.
- 1 10. Agarose-Poly (ethylene glycol) beads made by the method of claim 4.
- 1 11. The method of using the beads of claim 1 in accordance with Application 1.
- 1 12. The method of using the beads of claim 1 in accordance with Application 2.
- 1 13. The method of using the beads of claim 1 in accordance with Application 3.
- 1 14. The method of using the beads of claim 1 in accordance with Application 4.
- 1 15. Each and every novel feature and novel combination of features present in or  
2 possessed by the article and techniques herein disclosed.